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VICTORY GARDENING IN 1946

At the National Garden Conference held in Washington, March 26, 27, and 28, all phases of the gardening program were represented both by the speakers and the audience. Garden club leaders, representatives of the horticultural trade, agricultural colleges, schools, the press and radio, and the Government, and editors of various kinds of publications all were in attendance. Among those on the program were Secretary of Agriculture Clinton P. Anderson; Secretary of Commerce Henry C. Wallace; Chester C. Davis, Chairman of the Famine Emergency Committee; John W. Snyder, Director, Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion; Wilson W. Wyatt, Administrator, National Housing Agency; Dr. Frank G. Boudreau, Chairman of the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council; and Roy F. Hendrickson, Deputy Director General of UNRRA. Papers were given also by officers of National and State garden associations, and other outstanding leaders in various phases of the gardening program. Six working committees developed the following assignments and reported their findings to the entire group: (1) Immediate victory garden program and its relation to Famine Emergency Program; (2) a long-time garden program for America; (3) garden activity for youth; (4) home fruit planting for town and country; (5) research needs of home gardeners; and (6) conservation and use of food for home, community, and famine relief.

The conference was opened by Paul C. Stark as director of the National Garden Program, who stated the objectives for which the meeting was called. H. W. Hochbaum, Vice Chairman of the USDA Garden Committee, outlined the action plan of the conference. The main objectives of this national meeting, significant for consideration by garden leaders everywhere, are quoted here:

1. To remobilize the victory gardeners of the war years so that a maximum production will be ob-

tained from city, suburban, town, and farm home gardens, thereby aiding in making more food available for the relief of starving people in Europe and Asia. The 1946 Victory Garden Program is an essential part of President Truman's Famine Emergency Program.

2. To consider the benefits of a broad, continuing program in gardening, including home and community improvement, both urban and rural.

Secretary Anderson read a letter from President Truman, an excerpt from which follows:

"To the National Garden Conference:

"It is heartening to know that you are meeting today to remobilize the Nation's victory gardeners so that additional food will be produced, thereby making other foods available for hunger relief. Cooperation of Federal, State, and local groups made a winning team for home garden production in the war years. I am gratified to see you continuing this teamwork. . . ."

Secretary Anderson reminded the group that the world is in the midst of the most serious international food crisis of modern times. At least until the next harvest we shall be pressed to the limit of our ability to keep enough food supplies moving into stricken areas of the world to do our part in preventing widespread starvation. These food supplies will not assure well-balanced diets to the hungry people looking to us for help. They will do little more than supply the small margin between life and death. Secretary Anderson also emphasized the fact that, so far as the food situation is concerned, the pressure is greater now than ever. There is more need for victory gardens in this first year of peace than there was in any year of the war. The war against famine is just reaching the stage of a decisive battle. If we lose this war we will jeopardize all that we gained on the battlefields.

Chester C. Davis stated that victory

gardens will help us conserve wheat by providing extra vegetables to make up for less bread and cereals. They will cushion against local and temporary food shortages during the critical months. They will enable many more people to can and preserve foods, thus making it possible for them to donate more to collection campaigns for foreign relief.

Roy F. Henrickson impressed the conference group with the seriousness of the need for food in Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland when he cited figures on the limited amount of grain on hand in these five countries, on the rate of the daily ration, and the amount of grain needed monthly to meet that ration. It is appalling to note that the supply of wheat on hand is far less than enough to provide the people in these countries with around a half-pound loaf of bread daily for 1 month. When we are told also that the diet consists largely of bread at present, the imminence of starvation, unless we share fully and quickly with these unfortunate people, is self-evident.

* * *

An immediate challenge to nutrition committees and all other organizations and agencies carrying on educational work is inherent in the following high lights of the garden conference: Millions of people are and will continue to be in critical need of food relief at least until their next good harvest is in. That food produced by victory gardeners can help meet this need by releasing scarce, easy-to-ship, high-calorie foods was impressed on the conference group by one speaker after another. Another point strongly emphasized was the importance of increasing home-produced food by planting at intervals to stretch out the growing season. And still another point, made especially forceful by the report of the working committees, dealt with the contributions that an all-out home food preservation program can make to the family's food supply in the winter of 1946.

SURVEY OF HOME GARDENING AND HOME FOOD PRESERVATION IN 1945

The Division of Program Surveys of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, USDA, conducted its second Nation-wide survey in the fall of 1945, to obtain information on the amount of home gardening and home food preservation carried on during

the year. The 3,008 households selected for the study were in 7 metropolitan areas and 47 counties. They were a representative cross section of all households in the United States.

Gardening: The survey showed that about one-half of the households, taking the country as a whole, had home gardens in the summer of 1945. As it is estimated that there are approximately 37 million households, this means that there were about 18.4 million gardens. The highest proportion were in rural areas, both among farm and nonfarm families. In the nonfarm group, gardens were more common among large families than small ones, and older people more frequently had gardens than younger people. Both the number and the size of home gardens were about the same in 1945 as in 1944, but the yield of garden crops was smaller in 1945.

One-half of the people who started gardening recently believe that their families have eaten more vegetables than they ordinarily do because of having a garden. Nonfarm people are more likely to say that they would keep on eating as many vegetables if they had no garden than are farm people.

Food preservation: The survey indicated that some form of home food preservation was carried on in about 25.7 million (of the 37 million) homes in the United States. In about two-thirds of the nonfarm households and in more than nine-tenths of the farm households some fruits or vegetables were preserved by canning, brining, pickling, freezing, or drying. Although about as many housewives reported some preserving in 1945 as in 1944, about half of those families put up less food in 1945. Most housewives canned the fruits and vegetables they put up, but a small part used quick-freezing for some of their preservation. Some kind of pickles, relish, or catsup were put up by a large proportion of housewives. Some storage of fruits and vegetables was reported.

Canning, curing, or freezing of meat, canning or freezing of chicken, and freezing or salting of fish were also reported by a small number of the families. Pressure canners were used by about two-fifths of the farm housewives and one-fifth of the nonfarm housewives who canned.

* * *

Translating the findings of this survey into needs for continued educational work, it seems that city families need

more stimulation to garden and preserve than rural families, as would be expected. Suggestions on what to plant and preserve for a well-rounded supply of vegetables throughout the year would be helpful to families who will start gardening and preserving for the first time. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of using the pressure canner for nonacid vegetables, meat, fish, and poultry. The advantages of making use of community canning-center facilities seem to need featuring where centers exist. The use of these centers should be encouraged not only for family canning but also to increase the amount of food preserved for the school-lunch program and for overseas relief. Where there is no community canning center, the possibility of establishing one or of making some arrangement with a small commercial cannery for groups to can should be explored. The wartime experience of nutrition committees in coordinating action on these programs in similar ways will make both chairmen and members valuable workers and leaders in the present emphasis that must be quickly made.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

RHODE ISLAND.—The State Nutrition Committee reports quick action taken on the famine emergency campaign as follows: Around the 20th of March, the State chairman sent a letter to all local nutrition committee chairmen in Rhode Island summarizing the facts about the food crisis and discussing briefly how nutrition committees could help with the job to be done. The letter also indicated that the State chairman was writing a similar letter to all women's organizations in the State, including the PTA, church groups, the League of Women Voters, Federated Women's Clubs, and home-economics teachers. All letters listed the organizations that were being contacted, so that coordinated effort could quickly be started. The State chairman's plan to send four follow-up communications on "what to do"—one each week—was also announced. The first of these, on what to do about bread, went out a week later. A suggested exhibit (for schools, churches, etc.) was described, and a sketch of a poster to accompany the exhibit was included.

The second communication, to be sent the first part of April, will feature fat conservation and salvage; the third,

victory gardens; and the fourth, home food preservation.

In addition to the general letter and the four weekly follow-up communications, the Nutrition Committee sent out materials on fighting food waste and on fat conservation that were on hand from the 1944 conservation campaign.

NEW MEXICO.—The State Nutrition Council sponsored a food-preservation workshop conference at Las Cruces, March 19 to 21, which was attended by 51 persons. Assisting as coordinators were the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, the Valley Locker Co-op, and the Production and Marketing Administration. One of the high lights of the conference was a luncheon on March 21 at which frozen foods were prepared and served to 75 persons. At one afternoon session a demonstration was given on the canning of meat. The conference was considered highly successful because of the large amount of technical and practical information covered jointly by speakers, "working groups," and demonstrations. A Freezer Locker Association was organized, and plans were made for a meeting next year. The association asked the State Nutrition Committee to cooperate by conducting a workshop at that meeting.

VERMONT.—The State Nutrition Committee calls attention to a series of six School-Lunch Management Conferences that were held in Vermont during January. These meetings were sponsored by the State Department of Education in cooperation with the Production and Marketing Administration and the State Department of Public Health. The conferences were planned to help school-lunch workers and sponsors realize their potential contributions to the health and education of all school children.

The Disney film, "Something You Didn't Eat," and a series of films, "Our Health in Your Hands," produced by the U. S. Public Health Service, were shown. A Type A lunch, served all participants, provided a practical educational experience for all who attended. The closing of each conference included a discussion of the USDA Reimbursement Program.

It was hoped by the sponsors of the conferences that the meetings would create an understanding and appreciation of the need for (1) improvement in the health of all children through better sanitation and safety in school lunch-

rooms; (2) increased appreciation of wholesomely prepared food; (3) encouragement of more efficient purchasing; (4) planning better facilities and equipment, with minimum expenditures; and (5) assistance to school-lunch workers with their individual problems, including questions on Federal reimbursement programs.

SOUTH DAKOTA.—The State Nutrition Committee met on March 16 after a 6 months' "recess." Each member reviewed the activities his or her organization had been carrying on in the field of nutrition, as a basis for discovering possible problems or needs. Two State-wide problems seemed to require special attention: (1) Too few schools were having adequate hot lunches for the children; (2) poor meals were being served in many restaurants.

One of the recent chief accomplishments of the State Nutrition Committee was its cooperation with county teachers' institutes in presenting suggestions for improving the quality of carried lunches.

The State committee went on record as interested in helping to reactivate county nutrition committees. A committee was appointed to apportion the counties among members who travel over the State. It is hoped that these "traveling representatives" of the State Nutrition Committee can assist with at least one meeting of each county committee.

ILLINOIS.—The State Nutrition Committee held its annual meeting in Springfield March 22-23 with an attendance of about 160. The general theme of the conference was "Nutrition in the Atomic Age." One session was devoted largely to reports of activities in seven counties: Piatt, Grundy, St. Clair, Macon, Will, Kane, and McDonough. The annual State conference is intended primarily to stimulate nutrition programs in the counties. Therefore, in addition to allowing for an exchange of ideas, other sessions schedule speakers who give up-to-date pertinent nutrition information that will help committees develop community programs.

Each year the State Nutrition Committee also sets up suggestions for a program of work for county nutrition com-


mittees, developed with a view to solving nutrition problems in the State. The county committees understand that these suggestions may be supplemented or replaced by local problems needing immediate attention.

The State committee uses professional personnel from the Division of Vocational Home Economics, the University of Illinois, and the Department of Public Health as field consultants to county committees. At least four news letters and many other releases are sent from the State chairman's office each year to county nutrition committee chairmen and to the chairman of the publicity committee of the State Nutrition Committee. The State committee sponsors eight district nutrition conferences each year in different sections of the State for county chairmen and members. The plan of these conferences is similar to that of the annual State conference; talks by outstanding persons on timely information are followed by a working session to discuss problems and develop a program of work for the year.

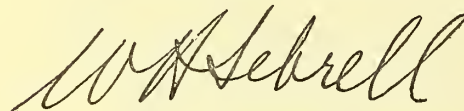
NEW MATERIAL (Sample not enclosed)

Three "fact sheets" on various phases of the famine emergency campaign have been sent to persons on mailing list for this News Letter. They have dealt with the campaign in general, with the gardening program, and with suggestions on how the homemaker can help save food to fight famine. At any time that other material of help on this important program is released, we will send it to you.

Sincerely yours,



M. L. Wilson, Chief,
Nutrition Programs.



W. H. Sebrell, Associate Chief,
Nutrition Programs.